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TESTIMONY OF HOUSTON PUTNAM LOWRY IN PARTIAL OPPOSITION TO HB: 7192– AN ACT CONCERNING MUNICIPAL AND REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND EFFICIENCIES

This testimony is submitted in partial opposition to of HB: 7192 – An Act Concerning Municipal And Regional Opportunities And Efficiencies. I am an elected member of the Avon Board of Education, although I submit this written testimony in my individual capacity. I refer to lines 189-191 and lines 647-661 of the proposed bill, which should be deleted.

The Avon Public Schools works hard at sharing services when it is appropriate. When we conduct a reverse on-line auction (where vendors offer to sell us specific standardized products, such as laptop computers) where the low bidder gets the contract, we invite the Town of Avon and other governmental entities to join in our on-line auction. This allows us to purchase a larger amount of equipment (getting us a bigger volume discount) and allows other governmental entities to take advantage of our on-line auction without having to set up their own. The other governmental entities also take advantage of our combined volume discount.

The Avon Public Schools participates in regional buying cooperatives. This allows us to use the buying power of multiple school districts while still controlling our own destiny.

The commission does not need to study this because it is already occurring on a wide scale by Boards of Education. Such a study would be a waste of money.

The bill also refers to another proposed study regarding the sharing of human resources, accounting, payroll, procurement, finance, information technology, risk management, health care and retirement benefits, insurance and claims administration, and buildings and grounds in lines 647-661. We have already done such a study and have found there is little (if any) to save through such sharing. The Avon Public Schools is proud to have negotiated labor contracts which eliminated defined benefit pension plans. We have moved to high deductible health plans. There is no cost savings because each Board of Education has multiple collective bargaining agreements and they are not similar across school districts.

Other school districts have already done such studies. Bigger does not mean bigger, better, or cheaper. Our school district is nimble and gets the job done in a cost effective manner.

I request the Planning and Development Committee **NOT** report this bill to the General Assembly without deleting lines 189-191 and lines 647-661.